

Effective Feedback

Effective feedback has the following characteristics:

- **Clear** – The best feedback is clear and informative. Even if feedback is specific and accurate in the eyes of the mentor, it does not have much value if the beginning teacher cannot understand it or is overwhelmed by it.
- **Targeted** – Effective feedback is targeted and is related to a specific goal or focus. Any effective feedback system involves a clear goal and results related to that goal.
- **Objective** – All effective feedback is objective, meaning that it is based on facts and observation. Effective feedback is not based on personal opinions, assumptions, or interpretations.
- **Timely** – Mentors should strive to provide feedback within 48 hours of the observation. Immediate feedback is not recommended, nor is feedback that occurs multiple days after the observation.
- **Actionable** – Effective feedback is based on data and allows for action. Mentors should provide feedback that beginning teachers can process and “act on” rather than feedback that is vague and has no direction.

During the process of providing feedback, the mentor assumes the role of a coach. The mentor is coaching the mentee in instruction and professional practice through dialogue. This coaching dialogue will allow the mentor to provide feedback to the mentee in a professional way that promotes reflection, collaboration, and growth. The mentor must consider several things before/while providing feedback to a beginning teacher:

- **Establish trust** – The mentor must ensure that the teacher trusts him/her. If the beginning teacher already trusts the mentor, he/she is more likely to accept the feedback with open-mindedness rather than defensiveness.

- **Ask permission to give feedback** – Once the teacher has had an opportunity to share his/her own thoughts about the observation, the mentor might ask, “Can I share a few things that I saw during your observation?” or “Are you ready to see your data?” It is important for the teacher to understand that the mentor is asking to share data collected during the observation.
- **Share feedback rooted in data** – When feedback is rooted in data and evidence, rather than the mentor’s judgment and assumptions, the mentee is more likely to accept the feedback as valid and more willing to work toward improvement.
- **Limit critical feedback** – Mentors should be aware of how critical their feedback is during the post-observation conference. Even if the feedback is appropriate, but perceived to be critical by the beginning teacher, this perception can cause problems. The mentor should limit the critical feedback to one or two key points that relate to the focus of the observation.
- **Utilize the Coaching Dialogue Protocol** – When providing guidance, support, and feedback to beginning teachers, mentors should use the Coaching Dialogue Protocol, which consists of three components:
 - **Validate** – acknowledge effort and specific work, empower the mentee, demonstrate an understanding of thoughts and emotions
 - **Clarify** – deepen understanding, eliminate confusion, encourage reflection
 - **Stretch & Apply** – move practice forward and establish commitment to next steps

It is the mentor’s responsibility to guide this dialogue in a manner that invites the beginning teacher to reflect on the feedback given during the conference. Mentors should provide the mentee with sufficient time to ask questions, answer questions, and/or communicate any plans for next steps.